1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

241 when fire is applied, logs of wood being placed at intervals of a few feet to prevent as far as possible the ashes being blown away by the wind. The lands are not hoed, nor treated any further, paddy and millet being sown broadcast, and the seeds of root crops, as well as of maize and Job's tears, being dibbled into the ground by means of small hoes. No manure, beyond the wood ashes above mentioned, is used on this class of land; there is no irrigation, and no other system of watering is resorted to. The seeds are sown generally when the first rain falls. This style of cultivation, or *jhum*, is largely resorted to by the people inhabiting the eastern and southern portions of the Jaintia Hills, e.g. the Bhois and Lalangs, the Lyngams and
243 Garos of the western tracts of the district. Wet paddy land
312 (*kali* or *pynthor*) is, as the name implies, the land where the kind of paddy which requires a great deal of water is grown. The bottoms of valleys are divided up into little compartments by means of fairly high banks corresponding to the Assamese *áils*, and the water is let in at will into these compartments by means of skilfully contrived irrigation channels, sometimes a
243 mile or more in length. The soil is made into a thick paste in the Jaintia Hills by means of the plough, and in the Khasi Hills through the agency of the hoe. Droves of cattle also are driven repeatedly over the paddy-fields until the mud has acquired the right consistency. The seed is then sown broadcast in the wet mud. It is not sown first in a seedling bed and then transplanted, as in Assam and Bengal. When the plants have grown to a height of about four inches, water is let in again; then comes the weeding, which has to be done several
243 times. When the crop is ripe, the ears are cut with a sickle
784 (*ka rashi*) generally, so as to leave almost the entire stalk, and are left in different parts of the field. A peculiarity about the Lyngam and the Khasis and Mikirs of the low hills, or Bhois as they are called, is that they reckon it *sang*, or taboo, to use the sickle. They reap their grain by pulling the ear through the hand. The sheaves, after they are dry, are collected and
243 threshed out on the spot, either by beating them against a stone (*shoh kba*), or by men and women treading them out (*iuh kba*). Cattle are not used for treading out the grain. The grain is then collected and placed in large bamboo receptacles

l: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

(*ki thiar*). The paddy-fields are not manured. The Khasis, when cultivating high lands, select a clayey soil if they can. In the early part of the winter the sods are turned over with the hoe, and they are exposed to the action of the atmosphere for a period of about two months. When the sods are dry, they are placed in piles, which are generally in rows in the fields, and by means of ignited bunches of dry grass within the piles a slow fire is kept up, the piles of sods being gradually reduced to ashes. This is the "paring and burning process" used in England. The ashes so obtained are then carefully raked over the field. Sometimes other manure is also applied, but not when paddy is cultivated. The soil is now fit to receive the seed, either high-land paddy, millet, Job's tears, or other crops, as the case may be. The homestead lands are plentifully manured, and consequently, with attention, produce good crops. They are cultivated with the hoe.

The cultivation of oranges in the southern portion of the district ranks equally in importance with that of the potato in the northern. The orange, which is known in Calcutta as the Chhatak or Sylhet orange, comes from the warm southern slopes of the hills in this district, where it is cultivated on an extensive scale. Although oranges do best when there is considerable heat, they have been known to do well as high as 3,000 ft.; but the usual limit of elevation for the growth of oranges in this district is probably about 1,000 to 1,500 ft. The orange of the Khasi Hills has always been famous for its excellence, and Sir George Birdwood, in his introduction to the "First Letter Book of the East India Company," page 36, refers to the orange and lemon of Garhwál, Sikkim, and Khasia as having been carried by Arab traders into Syria, "whence the Crusaders helped to gradually propagate them throughout Southern Europe." Therefore, whereas the potato was imported, the orange would appear to be indigenous in these hills.

Nurseries.—The seeds are collected and dried by being exposed to the sun. In the spring nurseries are prepared, the ground being thoroughly hoed and the soil pulverized as far as possible. The nursery is walled with stones. The seeds are then sown, a thin top layer of earth being applied. The

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After the plants have attained the height of about 6 in., they are earthed up. When the leaves turn yellow, it is a sign that the potatoes are ripe. The different kinds of sweet potatoes grown and the yam and another kind of esculent root—*u sohphlang* (*flemingia vestita Benth.*) will be noticed under the head of "Crops."

The Khasis possess very few agricultural sayings and proverbs, but the following may be quoted as examples:—

(1) *Wat ju ai thung jingthung ne bet symbai ha uba sniew kti.*

Do not allow plants to be planted or seeds to be sown by one who has a bad hand.

As elsewhere, there is a belief amongst the Khasis that some people's touch as regards agriculture is unlucky.

(2) *Thung dieng ne bet symbai haba ngen bnai, ym haba shai u bnai.*

Plant trees or sow seeds not when the moon is waxing, but when it is on the wane.

(3) *Wei la saw bha ka bneng sepngi jan miet phin sa ioh jingrang lashai.*

A red sky in the west in the evening is the sign of fine weather to-morrow.

Cf. our English proverb "a red sky in the morning is a shepherd's warning, a red sky at night is a shepherd's delight."

CROPS.

The varieties of rice found in the Khasi Hills are divided into two main classes, one grown as a dry crop on high lands, and the other raised in valleys and hollows which are artificially irrigated from hill streams. The lowland rice is more productive than that grown on high lands, the average per acre of the former, according to the agricultural bulletin, as ascertained from the results of 817 experimental crop cuttings carried out during the fifteen years preceding the year 1898, being 11.7 maunds of paddy per acre, as against an average of 9.4 maunds per acre (resulting from 667 cuttings made during the

1:Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

243 same period) for the latter.* The average out-turn of both
433 kinds is extremely poor, as compared with that of any description of rice grown in the plains. The rice grown in the hills is said by the Agricultural Department to be of inferior quality, the grain when cleaned being of a red colour, and extremely
244 coarse. The cultivation of potatoes is practically confined to the Khasi Hills, there being little or none in the Jaintia Hills. The normal out-turn of the summer crop sown in February and harvested in June is reported by the Agricultural Department to be five times the quantity of seed used, and that of the winter crop, sown in August and September on the land from which the summer crop has been taken, and harvested in December, twice the quantity of seed. The winter crop is raised chiefly for the purpose of obtaining seed for the spring sowings, as it is found difficult to keep potatoes from the summer crop in good condition till the following spring. The usual quantity of seed used to the acre at each sowing is about 9 maunds, so that the gross out-turn of an acre of land cultivated with potatoes during the year may be taken at 63 maunds, and the net out-turn, after deducting the quantity of seed used, at 45 maunds. The above estimate of the Agricultural Department rests chiefly on the statements of the cultivators, and has not been adequately tested by experiment.

244 Since the appearance of the potato disease in 1885-86 there
439 has been a great decrease in the area under potato cultivation. In 1881-82 the exports of potatoes from the district were as high as 126,981 maunds. From 1886-87 the exports began annually to decrease until in 1895-96 the very low figure of 8,296 maunds was reached. The figures of export for the last nine years are as follows:—

1896-97	16,726 maunds.
1897-98	7,805 "
1898-99	9,272 "
1899-00	5,422 "
1900-01	29,142 "
1901-02	38,251 "
1902-03	36,047 "
1903-04	50,990 "

* See Bulletin No. 5 of the Agricultural Department of Assam, 1898, pp. 4 and 5.

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It will be seen that in the three years following the earthquake of 1897 the exports fell very low indeed. Since 1901 the trade has been steadily recovering, and the exports of 1904 reached half a lakh of maunds.

It will be observed that there has been some improvement, but the exports are still not half what they were in 1881-82. There are two kinds of sweet potatoes grown in the district, the Garo potato (*u phan Karo*), which appears to have been introduced from the Garo Hills, and *u phan sawlia*, the latter being distinguished from the Garo potato by its having a red skin, the Garo potato possessing a white skin. These kinds of potato are planted on all classes of land except *hali*, they do best on jhumed and homestead lands. The yam proper (*u phan shynreh*) is also largely grown. The small plant with an edible root called by the Khasis *u sohphang* (*flemingia vestita Benth.*), is also largely grown. The roots of the plant after being peeled are eaten raw by the Khasis. As far as we know, this esculent is not cultivated in the adjoining hill districts. Job's tears (*coix lachryma-Jobi*) * are extensively grown, and are planted frequently with the *sohphlang* mentioned above. This cereal forms a substitute for rice amongst the poorer cultivators. Maize or Indian corn (*u riew hadem*) is grown frequently, thriving best on homestead land, and requires heavy manuring; it is grown in rotation with potatoes. Next in importance to rice comes the millet (*u krai*), as a staple of food amongst the Khasis. There are three varieties of millets generally to be seen in the Khasi Hills:—*u 'rai-soh* (*setaria Italica*), *u 'rai-shan* (Paspalum sanguinale), and *u 'rai-truh* (Eleusine coracana). *U 'rai-shan* is cultivated in rotation with the potato, *u 'rai-soh* and *u 'rai-truh* are generally cultivated on jhumed land, where they thrive well. Millet is sometimes used instead of rice in the manufacture of spirit by the Khasis; *u rymbai-ja* (*phaseolus calcaratus*), and *u rymbai ktung* (*glycine soja*) are beans which are cultivated occasionally. Khasis highly prize the fruit of the plantain, which they give to infants mashed up. The following are the best known varieties:—*Ka kait khún, ka kait siem, ka kait kulbuit, ka kait bamon, ka kait shyieng.*

* Khasi *u soh-riew.*

1: Gurdon E-4, 5 (no date) 1907 AR7 Khasi AR7

301 This stone is apparently some rough gem which may be picked up by the Lynngams in the river beds. A rich man amongst 556 them, however, is one who possesses a number of metal gongs, 534 which they call *wiang*. For these they pay very high prices, 436 Rs. 100 being quite a moderate sum for one of them. Being curious to see one of these gongs, I asked a *sirdar*, or head-man, to show me one. He replied that he would do so, but it would take time, as he always buried his gongs in the jungle for fear of thieves. Next morning [531] he brought me a gong of bell metal, with carvings of animals engraved thereon. The gong when struck gave out a rich deep note like that of Burmese or Thibetan gongs. These gongs have a regular currency in this part of the hills, and represent to the Lynngams "Bank of England" notes. It would be interesting to try to ascertain what is their history, for no one in the Lynngam country makes them in these days. Is it possible that the Garos brought them with them when 534 they migrated from Thibet? The gongs are well known in the 622 Garo Hills, and I hear that when a *nokma*, or head-man, there 778 dies his corpse is laid out upon them. They thus possess also an element of sanctity, besides being valuable for what they will fetch to the Garos or Lynngams. We may hope to hear more about them in Captain Playfair's account of the Garos.

304 The Lynngams do not tattoo. Their weapons are the large-411 headed Garo spear, the dao, and the shield. They do not usually 243 carry bows and arrows, although there are some who possess them. They are by occupation cultivators. They sow two kinds of hill rice, red and white, on the hill-sides. They have no wet paddy cultivation, and they do not cultivate in terraces like the Nagas. They burn the jungle about February, after cutting down some of the trees and clearing away some of the debris, and then sow the paddy broadcast, without cultivating the ground in any way. They also cultivate millet and Job's-tears in the same way. With the paddy chillies are sown the 241 first year. The egg plant, arum, ginger, turmeric, and sweet 231 potatoes of several varieties are grown by them in a similar 784 manner. Those that rear the lac insect plant *landoo* trees (Hindi *arhal dal*) in the forest clearings, and rear the insect thereon. Some of these people, however, are prohibited by a

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

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workers and they were few in number.[1] They were particularly employed for such work as the clearing of jungle for new pan gardens in summer.

In the orange season (December to February) the number of workers increased and they were paid more: Rs. 1/8 were paid[2] for one load (one person carrying 80 pounds of oranges, from an orange garden to the railway station—about two miles). Usually a worker made three to five trips a day. Many workers from Jaintia used to come for this particular season.

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Semi-permanent workers were engaged for wet rice fields. They were usually Hindu cultivators: since these Khasi and other tribes do not know the technique of wet cultivation, plains people like the Biharee immigrants were engaged. These workers were provided with servants' quarters where they lived with their wives and children. However, very few Jatinga households possessed rice fields.

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The economic prosperity of Jatinga reached its climax during the period from 1934 to 1940. Since 1942, the orange production has been decreasing. In 1945, a serious disease attacked the orange gardens as well as the pan-leaf gardens. Besides, by depriving Jatinga, as it had Shella, of their most important markets, Dacca and Sylhet, the Partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 caused a serious economic depression in the whole region. On the other hand, because of the past prosperity, the population has rapidly increased during the last ten years. The serious economic condition of Jatinga is illustrated in the petition which was submitted by the Jatinga people when the Governor of Assam visited those areas in January 1956. It runs thus:

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"Since the last ten years or so, with the increase of population in the village and with the loss of fertility of the soil, the people were faced with economic depression. At present they are facing acute shortage of land they have also no scope to adopt other forms of cultivation like jhuming and wet rice cultivation, etc. Moreover, there has been successive attack of Bright's disease which destroyed and wiped out all the orange and pan gardens. And as such, majority of the families have to depend for their livelihood on daily wages. . . ."

It is indeed a serious situation for them, because the Khasi do not produce staple foods, such as rice; their economy is completely dependent on the trade of their products by which they purchase their main provisions, clothes, etc. Other peoples round Jatinga, being jhum cultivators, can at least get rice and cotton: the minimum requirements, staple foods and clothing are available even in the worst conditions, so that they can at least maintain themselves though the standard of living is low. As I stated before, a few households in Jatinga possessed rice fields, but the majority had none. Recently they rented some plots of jhum field for rice cultivation from Zemi-Naga of neighbouring villages.[3] However, its yield was but a small percentage of their consumption. A few

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1. If they had worked in the gardens of Jatinga, they might have got more profit than from their own jhum fields. For one day's labour, they got Ans. 8/. For one month, they could earn Rs. 15 with which they could buy about 4-5 maunds of rice (one maunds paddy cost Rs. 3-4). For one year it became 50 maunds, which was impossible to produce in a jhum field by a single person's labour.

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2. These rates, including the figures of note 1, apply to 1956.

3. Jatinga villagers told me that Zemi-Naga were kind enough to lend them their field for a negligible rent, though they had not enough for themselves. Zemi-Naga said that they owed much to Jatinga in the past, so that now they sympathised with the condition of Jatinga, and offered some parts of their jhum field.

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nure and chemical fertilizers. Both level land and hillsides are cultivated by the same hand techniques: 3 × 6-foot patches are fashioned with walkways between, sods are overturned within the patches and allowed to dry, the sods are burned slowly and the ashes spread over the soil, and finally the seed is sown, either broadcast or sunk with the aid of the typical Khasi hoe. The coldest part of the upland enjoys a two-crop year, and Khasis often double crop as well. Paddy has long been found in the lowlands, in parts of Jaintia and Bhoi, the only places where the plow is found. Nowadays paddy is more and more seen in the uplands, together with a simple terracing and irrigation technology. Many upland Khasis have house gardens in which they raise a wide variety of vegetables, including pumpkins, cabbage, radishes, sweet potatoes, eggplant, and many others. Important crops in Bhoi country are paddy rice, lac, caoutchouc, cotton, bananas, and pineapples; in War, they are betel nut, pan leaf, oranges, and sugar cane. **Fishing and hunting.** Fishing is done by poisoning streams, but this is a subsistence activity only in the southern foothills. Hunting was formerly by bow and arrow or by traps, including spring guns and pitfalls, but was always primarily a sport. [Cf. Stegmiller 1925.] **Gathering.** Khasis once gathered about 150 species of wild plants, most of them for food, but some for medicine. Thrifty villagers still gather food plants, but there is no real dependence on gathering. Medicinal plants continue to be very important. **Domestic animals.** Fowl, goats, pigs, and cattle are bred both for meat and sacrifice. Milk was formerly not utilized, but is now so popular that specialists keep herds of milch cows. Pigs are used as village scavengers, but some also receive prepared food. Cattle and goats forage freely in the fields during the winter, but are herded by a communally hired herdsboy during the agricultural season. Most households keep chickens, primarily for their eggs, and a few keep ducks. A few horses are also seen. Dogs are pariahs, except for hunting dogs. Cats are popular. **Food and stimulants.** The staple food of Khasis is boiled rice, together with the dried fish which is imported from Sylhet. Boiled beef, pork, and chicken are relished, but beyond the means of most. Meals are taken twice a day, in the morning and evening, although farmers also take a midday meal in the field, and others may take tea and cold sweet potatoes or rice bread. Certain foods are taboo to certain sibs. Stimulants are extremely common, especially betel nut, which is often accompanied by a bit of tobacco. Tobacco is also smoked as cigarettes and in hookah and other pipes. Every village has one or more household taverns, where distilled rice whisky is cooked and sold by the glass and by the bottle. Imported opium had spread widely in the malarious Bhoi country, but controls instituted in the 1940s have been fairly successful. All stimulants were once taken by men, women, and

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Uptill now the main sources of forest revenue in the district are timber, limestone, lac, bay leaf and elephants. 13

2.6 **Agriculture.**—The greater proportion of population of the district subsist on agriculture. The staple crops raised in the district are wet and dry rice, various kinds of millets, maize, potatoes, pineapples, oranges, arecanut, betel-leaf and bay leaf. To a smaller extent they grow in the gardens round their houses vegetables, pulses and occasionally sugarcane. 24

2.6.1 **The main crops : Rice.**—While wet rice is grown in the valleys with which the hills are intersected, dry rice is grown on the hill sides. Highland rice is seldom grown twice running on the same spot for after one crop the soil is exhausted and a fallow period of four to five years is usually allowed. Jowai subdivision is predominantly a wet rice producing area. In Shillong subdivision main wet rice pockets are the Bhoi area stretching upto the sung valley and the northern portion of the plateau, the Mylliem state, the south-western portion of the district and the southern plain portion of the district adjoining East Pakistan. Dry rice is grown more or less through out the district. While Jowai subdivision can claim self sufficiency in rice, Shillong subdivision is a deficit area and the people in this subdivision particularly those in the southern portion (border area) of the district have to depend on supplies from outside. Though there is no reliable statistices of the area under rice, a rough estimate is given elsewhere in the land utilisation table. 243

Maize and millet.—Are two important food crops of the district grown more or less throughout the district.

Potatoes are extensively grown in the higher slopes and in the lower land which are well drained. Generally two crops of potatoes are raised annually in the district. In respect of production and export of potato this district occupies the topmost position in the State of Assam. 244

Orange, betel leaf and arecanut are most extensively grown in the southern base of the hills, *i.e.* all over the border areas. Oranges are also grown in Bornihat areas, in the northern portion of the district. Orange and betelnut plantations extend from the foot of the hills to a height of about 1500 feet and are carried up the ravines which score the southern face of the high plateau. The district is an important producer of Bay-leaf which is abundantly found in the border areas of the district. Other valuable cash crops of the district are black pepper, turmeric, chillies, ginger, pineapple and various other fruits. 245

26.2 **Agricultural seasons.**—For wet rice, the lands which are naturally irrigated by virtue of their very location, are ploughed or hoed by about the middle of February and seed sown in May or June. Harvesting takes place in October and November. For dry rice, the land is hoed by about the middle of September, the solds are collected into little heaps and burnt and by February the land is again hoed up and the seed sown in April - May. Harvesting goes 243

243 on from October to December. For millets the seed is sown in April-May and reaped about six months later. Maize is usually sown in 244 April-May and ripens in August - September. For potato, generally three crops are raised in the district ; the first is sown in December-January and harvested in April-May, the second is sown in February-March and is gathered in June-July and the third is sown in July-August and is harvested in November-December.

245 For oranges and betelnut the orchards are cleared of weeds twice a year. Harvesting of orange takes place from October to January. Betelnut ripens at the beginning of the year and are collected between February and May.

241 2.6.3 **Agricultural implements.**—The usual agricultural implements are a hoe, a sickle, three or four kinds of doas, a harrow, a crowbar which is used for the construction of irrigation channels, 'sierras' and winnowing baskets. Bullock drawn plough is used in wet paddy cultivation in parts of Jowai subdivision and in Bhoi area and resembles the one in use in the plains of the State.

2. 6. 4. **General cultural practices.**—The cultivators mostly adhere to their indigenous practices of cultivation. Rotation of crops is not widely used. Cultivation of rice is usually done by broadcasting the seeds though transplanting is also in vogue in some areas. Mixed cropping is widely practised. Cultivation by making terraces in the hill slopes is gaining popularity in the district.

433 2.7 **Cottage Industries.**—Cottage Industries, it appears, have not 326 found very great favour among the people of the district. A few [322] families here and there manufacture iron implements, earthenware, [285] pottery, baskets, mats and jewellery. In striking contrast with other [306] districts weaving of cotton clothes is rare among the Khasis. The [286] Mikirs in Bhoi area and in areas adjoining North Cachar and Mikir [171] Hills practice it only for their domestic consumption. At present, the [654] Government is trying to popularise weaving in the district and this [231] has been welcomed by the Khasis. Among other cottage industries production of eri cocoon in the northern part of the district adjoining Kamrup district and bee keeping throughout the district are worth mentioning.

142 2.8 **The People.**—The Khasis and Jaintias are a short sturdy 147 race distinct from the neighbouring hill tribes. By nature they are 441 hardy and laborious and in respect of manual labour, they are free 563 from any inhibition. Side by side with the Khasis live the Mikirs, Garos and Nepalis who form respectively 7.32 percent, 3.38 percent and 3·27 per cent of the total rural population. Besides, there are plains people who are mainly concentrated in the town of Shillong. In the marketing centres of the border area there are a large number of Bengali Hindus who dominate the bulk of the trade in the border areas.

241 2.9 **Occupation.**—The greater portion of the population of the [433] district subsists on cultivation. More than 75 percent of the rural [461] households are predominantly agricultural. The industrious Khasi agriculturists males and females have a high regard for hard labour

8·5—In the following paragraphs we have reproduced the yield rates of different crops, calculated on the basis of area harvested and total produces reported by the cultivators. For assesment of correct yield rates it is necessary to conduct a scientifically designed crops cutting survey which in view of its largeness in magnitude and other complexities associated with the type of experiments, could not be fitted in with the programme of the present survey. It is admitted that the yield estimates worked out by us are proved to be subjected to the usual limitations of this type of data.

Yield

1. **Paddy.**—It will be seen from table above that average yields of paddy per acre for Border area, General area and Project area are respectively 8.38 maunds, 12.92 maunds and 12.60 maunds and for the district as a whole it comes to 11.65 maunds though there are cases where maximum yield goes to above 18 maunds per acre. Thus it is seen that the average yield is much less than the average yield for the State of Assam (plain district) which is above 18 maunds per acre. Average yield in Border area is evidently much smaller. Apart from low fertility of land, another reason for this low average is that in a number of villages selected from Border area such as Syndai, Amki and Lumshnong, there was widespread havoc to standing crops was caused by wild elephants.

2. **Potato.**—The average for the three areas comes to 21·61 maunds per acre which is in contrast to the State average of above 40 maunds per acre. Our estimate has in fact been lowered due to inclusion of a few villages in the foot hills where potatoes don't grow well, otherwise in a number of high altitude villages, yield per acre well exceeded 40 maunds. The average for Border area is rather too low. Apart from unsuitability of Border land of high altitude potatoes another reason for this low average is that during the reference year the crop suffered from widespread incidence of pests and insects.

3. **Orange.**—yield of orange in Border area, Project area and General area was found to be 5. 27 luties or 5396 numbers against 16.76 luties or 17162 numbers and 2.80 luties or 2867 numbers respectively Thus the average yield in Border area, even considering the mixed nature of some gardens is much low. The reasons are obvious.

4. **Betelnut**—Average yield per acre from Border area, Project area and General area was found to be 2.93 luties (18752 numbers), 4.11 luties (26304 numbers) ann 3.03 luties (19392 numbers) respectively bringing the average for all the three areas to 2.95 luties per arce.

5. **Betel leaf.**—Average yield per acre works out at 17·15 kuris, 50.64 kuris and 24 kuris in Border area, Project area and General area respectively. Thus in Booder area the average is much lower. This is due to the fact that most of the gardens remained unplucked for want of market for leaf.

20: Hunter G-4 (no date) 1897 AR7 Khasi AR7

In the interior of the Hills the largest villages are mere clusters of huts. The great majority of the inhabitants are employed in agriculture, but there are no data upon which a proportion of agriculturists to non-agriculturists could be based.

There is no immigration into the District. Both the Khásiás and the Syntengs have been successful in preserving to the present day their primitive isolation, free from the interference of Hinduism. They still maintain their aboriginal forms of belief and religious worship, and repudiate alike the authority of Bráhmans and the entire system of caste. To some extent, however, they have given way to Hindu prejudices in the matter of purity of food. The few Hindus to be found in the Hills are temporary residents, engaged in civil and military employ, who always contemplate returning to their own homes. The traders are for the most part natives of the Hills; for the Márwárí merchants, who penetrate into every other corner of Assam, have been able to obtain no footing in the face of Khásí competition. There is likewise no emigration from the District. The hillmen are a well-to-do and contented race, and either produce themselves or obtain by trade sufficient to satisfy their scanty wants. A certain number of both Khásiás and Syntengs proceed southwards every year to work on the tea gardens of Cáchár and Sylhet, but such absence from home is only temporary.

AGRICULTURE: RICE.—Thirteen different varieties of rice are cultivated in the District, of which the following is a list, giving the Khásí name as well as the description of the grain:—(1) *U-kyba-khyuriam* (*u*, the masculine article, meaning 'the,' and *kyba*, noun masculine, meaning 'paddy'), brown rice with long grain; (2) *u-kyba-khynriam bai-lih*, a white rice with long grain; (3) *u-kyba la-toh*, round-grained rice; (4) *u-kyba ksai*, bearded, husked; (5) *u-kyba-dew-ba-iong*, black husked rice (literally *u* = 'the,' *kyba* = 'paddy,' *dew* = 'earth,' *ba* = 'that,' *iong* = 'black'); (6) *u-kyba-ba-lih*, white rice; (7) *u-kyba-seim*, scented rice (literally *u* = 'the,' *kyba* = 'paddy,' *seim* = 'royal'); (8) *u-kyba la-kroh*, large-grained rice; (9) *u-kyba-ba-tlang*, small-grained rice; (10) *u-kyba sa-bia*, early rice; (11) *u-kyba ru-bon*, late rice; (12) *u-kyba tang-la*, rice grown along with beans; (13) *u-kyba-ba-túh*, small rice.

Rice is cultivated in marshy fields situated near running water as well as in high lands. The first seven of the above thirteen species of rice are sown in marshy lands during the months of April and May,

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and reaped generally in November and December, although in some parts of the hills the harvesting season commences as early as October. The following is the mode of cultivation pursued. About the middle of February, the husbandman commences to prepare the land by bringing water to his fields from neighbouring streams by means of regularly-cut channels. His land is thus kept inundated for from fifteen to thirty days, in order to soften the soil, when part of the water is allowed to escape through openings made in the banks surrounding the field. The land is then ploughed, the ploughing being called *lur-snih*, and three or four days afterwards it is made to undergo a second ploughing, called *lur-kyn-rei*. The fields are then refilled with water by the same means as before, and allowed to remain covered from ten to fifteen days, when the water is again drained off. After this the land is ploughed a third and a fourth time, the ploughings being termed *lur-shat* and *lur-bet* respectively, and the soil is made as smooth as possible with the hands or a hoe (*kadili*). The seed is then scattered broadcast over the field. Transplanting is not practised in the District. When the plant has sprung up about six inches above the ground, water is introduced into the field a third time, and allowed to stand for about two months, when it is drawn off for a few days, in order that the land may be weeded. After weeding, water is again let in, and is not drained off till the crop is ripe for the sickle. The other six varieties are grown on high lands, the mode of cultivation adopted being as follows:—About the middle of September the grass on the ground to be cultivated is turned up with a little of the soil attached to the roots, and allowed to remain until about February, when the turf so dug up is collected into heaps and burnt. In March or April, according as the rains happen to be early or late, these heaps are broken up and scattered over the fields. The land is then ploughed twice, or merely dug up with a hoe, and the seed is then sown. After sowing, the plough or hoe is used to cover up the seed, which sprouts in about ten days. Showers of rain at short intervals are now looked for, but too much rain, or, on the other hand, a succession of dry days, would injure the crop. As the plant acquires strength, less anxiety is felt concerning the rainfall. About the middle of September the ears begin to appear, and in November the grain is reaped. This description of rice is never grown for more than two successive seasons on the same land. No improvement has taken place within the last twenty years in the quality of the rice grown in

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243 the District, nor do any superior kinds of cereals appear to have been substituted for inferior ones.

THE DIFFERENT STAGES OF RICE CULTIVATION, in English and Khásí, are as follow:—The blade as it first shows, *spch-u-kyba;* the blade when well above the ground, *la-thylleng-u-kyba;* the ears when first formed, *lam-mat;* the ears beginning to ripen, *byr-tem;* the ripe ears, *la-hih;* unhusked rice, *u-kyba;* husked rice, *u-khaw;* cooked rice, *ka-ja.*

262 [435] [782] THE VARIOUS SOLID AND LIQUID PREPARATIONS made from rice are the following:—(1) *U-kypu*, cakes of different kinds, sold at six or twelve for a penny, according to size. (2) *U-shirá* or *gdh-khir*, prepared by the hillmen as an offering to their deity at the conclusion of the harvest. (3) *Kadam*, fermented rice water, sold at the rate of from three-farthings to threepence per quart, according to the strength of the liquor. (4) *Ka kiad-phatika* or *ka kiad-hárak*, a kind of spirits distilled from rice, and sold at from threepence to fourpence-halfpenny per quart.

273 435

243 OTHER CEREALS.—Indian corn, or *u-riu-ha-dem*, is grown on homestead lands. The ground is first manured, and the seed is sown about the middle of April. The crop is fit for cutting in September and October. A kind of millet seed called *u-krdi* is commonly sown with paddy on high lands. For want of more suitable land, however, this crop is often cultivated by itself on rocky slopes; and when this course is adopted, the jungle is first cut down in February and burnt. The seed is sown in April, and the crop gathered in December.

244 PULSES AND FIBRES.—Only two kinds of pulses are grown in the Hills, *u-rym-bai-ktung* and *u-rym-bai-jú*, both of which are varieties of beans. They are sown on high lands in March and April, and gathered in December. The only fibre is that made from the pine-apple stalk, which is largely used for making netted bags.

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245 [439] MISCELLANEOUS CROPS.—(1) Oranges.—There are numerous orange plantations in the neighbourhood of Cherrá Púnjí, and the fruit is exported to all parts of Bengal. In the year 1876-77 the estimated exports were 9,400,000 in number, valued at Rs. 37,600, or £3760, at the rate of Rs. 12 or £1, 4s. per three thousand. These figures show a decrease in number as compared with the estimated export twenty years ago. The trees flower in March or April, and the fruit ripens in October and the following months. In some cases the oranges are allowed to remain on the trees till March, but

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reared either for food or as articles of trade. A pair of ploughing oxen are worth about Rs. 32, or £3, 4s.; an ordinary cow, Rs. 12, or £1, 4s.; a score of kids six months old, Rs. 16, or £1, 12s.; and a score of full-grown pigs, from Rs. 100 to Rs. 160, or from £10 to £16. 231 435

THE AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENTS in use in the District consist of a plough, called *ka-jing-lúr* in Khásí, and a hoe or *kodáli*, called *u-mo-khiew*. When the cultivation is carried on by means of oxen, the plough is used, the hoe alone being used when the land is cultivated by manual labour. In the Khási Hills the use of the plough, except in a few rare cases, is entirely unknown; but in the Jáintiá Hills, oxen and ploughs are used to a greater extent. What is technically termed 'a plough' of land is equivalent to four English acres; a pair of oxen, together with the necessary implements, would represent a capital of about Rs. 40, or £4. 241 407 [435]

WAGES.—The Deputy-Commissioner reports that the price of labour in the District has more than doubled in the last ten years. The rates obtaining at present are from eightpence to one shilling a day for an ordinary labourer, and from one shilling to eighteenpence a day for a porter. An agricultural day-labourer earns sixpence, and a woman at the same work fourpence-halfpenny a day. Bricklayers, carpenters, and blacksmiths earn from a shilling to eighteenpence a day. The new Station of Shillong, the present seat of the Local Government, was established in May 1864, and since that date the demand for labour has markedly increased. The extension of the cultivation of potatoes has also had an appreciable effect on the price of labour. 178 464 465 [244]

PRICES OF FOOD GRAINS.—Of the different descriptions of rice in the markets of the District, the better sorts are imported from the neighbouring Districts of Sylhet and Kámrúp. The local produce is considered fit only for the use of the Khásiás. The price of the better descriptions depends entirely upon the distance from which the supplies come. In a distant market like that of Shillong, rice of the best quality generally sells at from 6 to 7 *sers* for the rupee, or from 16s. to 18s. 8d. per cwt.; and rice of inferior quality, which is only used by the poorer classes, at from 9 to 10 *sers* for the rupee, or from 11s. 2d. to 12s. 5d. per cwt. Little or no trade is carried on in unhusked grain. Paddy produced in the District generally sells at an average of from 15 to 16 *sers* per rupee, or from 7s. to 7s. 6d. per cwt. Indian corn, which is only grown to a small extent, is sold 435 439 243

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435 439 at the rate of two or three ears for a farthing; and sugar-cane, the [243] cultivation of which is also very limited, at from a little over a farthing 273 435 to three-farthings per cane. A fermented liquor called *kadam*, made from rice, is sold at from three-farthings to threepence a quart, according to strength; and a distilled spirit called *phatika*, or *kakiad-hárak*, at from threepence to fourpence-halfpenny a quart. This latter description of liquor is sometimes made very strong. No records exist by which the present prices of the above articles can [731] be compared with the rates ruling ten years ago. The maximum price of rice during the famine of 1866-67 was 5 *sers* 6 *chhatáks* for the rupee, or about £1 a hundredweight.

804 805 MEASURES, WEIGHTS, ETC.—The Hill people have no proper measurement of time or distance. If there be any standard for measuring distance, it is by the number of *pán* a man chews in the course of a journey, generally about one every half hour. In some parts of the District, land is measured by a stick called *ka dieng-nong*, varying in length from six to seven cubits. Liquids are measured in gourds of different measures, varying from half a *chhaták* to a *ser*, and also in bamboo tubes. Rice, potatoes, beans, etc. are measured in baskets, varying in size in different markets from two to eighty pounds.

805 In the Khásí Hills the inhabitants reckon eight days in the week, named as follows:—(1) Lyn-kah; (2) Nong-krem; (3) Um-long; (4) Rang-hep; (5) Shillong; (6) Pom-tih; (7) Um-nih; (8) Yeo-duh. In the Jáintiá Hills the eight days are named thus:—(1) Kyllao; (2) Pyn-sing; (3) Máo-long; (4) Máo-siang; (5) Máo-shai; (6) Pyn-kat; (7) Thym-blein; (8) Ka-hat. The Khásí months of the year, calculated by moons, are as follow:—(1) U Kylla lynkot; (2) U Rym-pang; (3) U Lyber; (4) U Laiong; (5) U Jimmang; (6) U Jilliw; (7) U Nai-túng; (8) U Nai-lar; (9) U Nai-lúr; (10) U Rysow; (11) U Nai-wing; (12) U Noh-prah.

464 423 LANDLESS LABOURING CLASSES.—There is, and always has been, a large class of labourers in the District who neither rent nor possess any land. Women and children are employed in manual out-door labour of all kinds.

423 [427] VARIETIES OF LAND TENURE can hardly be said to exist. There is nothing whatever resembling the relations between landlord and tenant throughout the Khásí Hills. The lands as a rule are either ancestral property or belong to village communities, and are cultivated under unwritten but well-understood agreements. Of the wide

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extent of waste land, some is cultivated in a manner resembling the *jûm* system,—successive crops are grown on a patch of land till the soil is exhausted, and then another spot is selected, where the same process is repeated afresh, but without anything that can be called a *jûmiâ* tenure. Any renting of land is exceptional, and there are no recognised rates of rent. The Deputy-Commissioner, however, states that an ordinary rate for rented land would be from two to three shillings a year for as much land as an individual can cultivate with his own hands.

MANURE is generally used in raising rice and potatoes. It is seldom purchased, the dung and litter of the cattle and other animals about the house being generally utilized for the purpose. For rice fields a little less than half a ton of manure, but for potatoes upwards of two tons, is required per acre. Manure, if purchased, would cost from 2s. 7½d. to 3s. 9d. per acre for rice land, and for potato fields from 12s. to 18s. per acre.

IRRIGATION for agricultural purposes is regularly practised. Water is brought to the land by means of channels cut from the numerous hill streams in the neighbourhood of the fields. Wells and tanks are unknown. The work of irrigation by means of these channels is very easily carried on, and at a very trifling outlay. Rotation of crops is not practised in the Hills.

MODEL FARM.—The Shillong Model Farm, established in 1873, has not proved a success. Experiments tried with wheat give some hope that cold-weather crops may profitably be introduced into the Hills. Two new varieties of potato—'red roughs' and 'pheasant's eye'—were successfully introduced in 1873-74; but these are not looked upon favourably by the Khásiás, as they only give one crop in the year, whereas the ordinary variety yields two crops. Several fruit-trees have been planted out, including apple, pear, cherry, nectarine, and plum; and the tables of the European residents are supplied with vegetables from the garden attached to the farm. A *Manual of Potato Cultivation* compiled by the superintendent has been translated into Assamese, and copies have been distributed among the adjoining Hill tribes. The general failure in all the agricultural experiments is attributed partly to the unfitness of the soil, and still more to the ravages of white ants and other insects peculiar to the Hills. The attempts to improve the indigenous breeds of live stock have been equally unfortunate. During the two years 1874-76 the sum of Rs. 1744

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supply. As the District depends so largely for its supply of rice upon Sylhet and Kámrúp, the state of the markets in those places exercises a greater influence on the rates in the Hills than any failure of the local harvest. In the year 1858 the price of common rice is said to have risen as high as 6 *sers* for the rupee, or 18s. 8d. per cwt., in consequence of the failure of the crops in the plains.

ROADS AND MEANS OF COMMUNICATION.—The following are the eight principal lines of road in the Khási and Jáintiá Hills:—(1) Road from Shillong to Gauhátí, in Kámrúp. This road has recently (1877) been opened for wheeled traffic throughout its entire length. The Deputy-Commissioner's Report for 1876-77 states that the number of passengers passing up and down may be estimated at about 800 or 1000 every month, and the number of carts already used at about 50. The *tonga dák* brings travellers up to Shillong from Gauhátí in two days by a comfortable and easy carriage service, while for natives a cheaper conveyance by bullock cart is available. At Gauhátí there is a good *dák* bungalow in charge of a *khánsámá*, where the usual accommodation provided in a hotel is to be found. The stages to Shillong are as follow:—(*a*) Gauhátí to Bornihát, 17 miles. The road is good throughout. There is a *dák* bungalow in charge of a *chaukidár* at Bornihát, where grain and rice are procurable. (*b*) Bornihát to Nongpoh, 14½ miles. The road is hilly throughout, but good. At Nongpoh, which is at an elevation of 1900 feet, there is a *dák* bungalow in charge of a *khánsámá*, from whom tea, liquors, and biscuits, etc. can be obtained. The *dák* bungalow is furnished with bedding, linen, etc. Grain and rice can be purchased in the *bázár*. (*c*) Nongpoh to Um-sning, 16½ miles. At Um-sning, elevation 2700 feet, there is a *dák* bungalow in charge of a *chaukidár*. Supplies or coolies are not procurable, but sometimes grain and rice can be purchased. (*d*) Um-sning to Um-jam, 9½ miles. At Um-jam there is a Public Works Department rest-house in charge of a *chaukidár*. Supplies or coolies are not procurable. (*e*) Um-jam to Shillong, 9½ miles, of which 6½ are a continuous ascent. At Shillong there are *dák* bungalows in the Artillery Lines, containing four separate rooms. A *khánsámá* is in attendance, and the rooms are completely furnished with bedding, linen, etc. This entire road, which has a total length of 67 miles, is as perfect a hill road as could be seen in any country, and a model of engineering skill. (2) Road running from Gauhátí across the Hills, *viâ* Nongklao, Máo-flang, Cherrá

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439 previous twenty years. The oranges, like the lime, were brought
648 down to Mr. Inglis' depot at Chhaták, where they were sold to
245 the dealers at the rate of about Rs. 1. 12 per 1000, or less than
434 half their present estimated price. It is stated in Mr. Allen's Report, that the Calcutta market was then chiefly supplied from the groves of Shella Púnjí and Bor Púnjí; the produce of the other villages was more perishable, and required to be sold in the neighbouring Districts. The fruit is known in Calcutta as 'Sylhet oranges.' The Bengal registration returns for 1876-77 show a total export from Sylhet of 64,505 *maunds* of 'fruit,' valued at Rs. 193,515, or £19,351.

439 The export of raw cotton appears to have greatly increased. In 1876-77 the total quantity exported was 36,000 *maunds*, valued at Rs. 216,000, or £21,600, at the rate of Rs. 6 per *maund*. Twenty years before the export had been only 12,000 *maunds*, valued at Rs. 42,000, at the rate of only Rs. 3. 8 per *maund*. The cotton is of inferior quality, with a short and woolly staple. It is chiefly consumed by the Sylhet weavers. The total registered export from that District in 1876-77 was only 4300 *maunds*, valued at Rs. 64,500,
434 at the high rate of Rs. 15 per *maund*.

439 The chief article of import now, as twenty years ago, is rice; for
[178 the hill-men have never grown sufficient for their own consumption,
• [243 and the recent establishment of the Civil Station of Shillong has increased the demand. In 1876-77 the total imports of rice were estimated at 205,800 *maunds*, valued at Rs. 720,300, or £72,030, at the rate of Rs. 3. 8 per *maund*. Twenty years ago the imports were nearly as great, viz. 150,000 *maunds*; but the value was only Rs. 225,000, at the rate of Rs. 1. 8 per *maund*, or less than one-half the present value. The chief source of supply is Sylhet District, which sends its surplus to the tea gardens of Cáchár, as well as to these Hills, and also exported, in the year 1876-77, 214,000 *maunds* of rice and 433,100 *maunds* of paddy into Bengal.

The importation of fish (fresh and dried) has enormously increased. In 1876-77 the total amount was 35,900 *maunds*, valued at Rs. 215,400, or £21,540, at the rate of Rs. 6 per *maund*. Twenty years ago the value was only Rs. 10,000, but the quantity is not given. The preparation of dried fish is a flourishing industry in the adjoining District of Sylhet.

The importation of cotton cloth has increased in an almost equal proportion. The value in 1876-77 was Rs. 158,000, or £15,800, as